

# Strains, Sprains and Fractures

In any guard, there are bound to be injuries. If you or anyone is hurt at practice or whatever, you **MUST** tell your director immediately! If he/she isn't there, find an adult and tell them. These tips are just for reference, just in case your band director or adult doesn't know what to do. These methods are here just for your reference. All first aid tips come from the Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook.

- A **STRAIN** is an injury caused by overstretching a muscle.
- A **SPRAIN** is an injury to the muscle and the ligaments, tendons, or soft tissues around a joint.
- A **FRACTURE** is a broken bone.

Generally speaking, if the injury is to a muscle, ligament, tendon, or bone, the basic treatment is the same. It is a two-part process: **RICE** (rest, ice, compression, elevation) to treat the acute pain or injury; and **MSA** (movement, strength, alternate activity) to help the injury heal completely and to prevent further problems.

Begin the **RICE** process immediately for most injuries. If you suspect a fracture, call an ambulance or go immediately to the hospital.

**R. REST.** Do not put weight on the injured joint for at least 24 to 48 hours.

- Use crutches to support a badly sprained knee or ankle.
- Support a sprained wrist, elbow, or shoulder with a sling. The inconvenience is justified by the faster healing of the injury
- Rest a sprained finger or toe by taping it to a healthy one.

Injured muscle, ligament, or tendon tissue needs time and rest to heal itself. Stress fractures need rest for two to four months to heal.

**I. ICE.** Cold will reduce pain and swelling and promote healing. Heat feels nice, but it does more harm than good until all of the swelling is gone.

- Apply ice or cold packs immediately to prevent or minimize swelling. For difficult-to-reach injuries, a cold pack works best.

**C. COMPRESSION.** Wrap the injury with an elastic (ACE) bandage or compression sleeve to immobilize and compress the sprain. Don't wrap it too tightly; this can cause swelling beyond the injury. Loosen the bandage if it gets too tight. A tightly wrapped sprain may fool you into thinking you can keep using the joint. With or without a wrap, the joint needs total rest for one to two days.

**E. ELEVATION.** Elevate the injured area on pillows while you apply ice and anytime you are seated or lying down. Try to keep the injury at or above the level of your heart to help minimize swelling.

- Ibuprofen may help ease inflammation and pain. Do not use drugs to mask the pain while you continue to use the injured joint.
- The use of heat after 48 hours of cold treatments is controversial. Some experts think it will increase swelling; others think it may speed healing. If you use heat, do not apply anything that is uncomfortably warm.

Begin the **MSA** process as soon as the initial pain and swelling have subsided. This may be in two days or up to a week or longer, depending on the location and the severity of the injury. Resume sports and activities slowly. Consider an increased pain and a sign to rest a while longer.



## Strains, Sprains and Fractures

**M. MOVEMENT.** Resume a full range of motion as soon as possible after an injury. After one to two days of rest, begin moving the joint. If an activity causes pain, continue resting the joint. Gentle stretching during healing will ensure that scar tissue formed as the injury heals will not limit movement later.

**S. STRENGTH.** Once the swelling is gone and range of motion is restored, begin gradual efforts to strengthen the injured part.

**A. ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES.** After the first few days, but while the injured part is still healing, phase in regular exercise using activities or sports that do not place a strain on the injured part.

### WHEN TO CALL A DOCTOR:

- If you suspect a severe sprain or fracture, call for an urgent-care or same-day appointment. After you have splinted the injury and applied ice, a short delay in professional care will not affect the outcome.
- If a sprained injury is very unstable, won't support your weight, or wobbles from side to side.
- If pain is still severe after two days of home treatment.
- If a sprain does not improve after four days of home treatment.

...from Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook

